

STATE

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MAGAZINE

Enabling Others

Embassy Kathmandu
Tackles Disability Access

Real Talk

Televised Debates Bolster
Albanian Election Process

Montevideo

Opportunities Abound in
Uruguay's Tranquil Capital



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Photo by Kevin Krug



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On the Cover

Beachgoers enjoy a vibrant sunset over the Rio de La Plata estuary from Playa Ramirez in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Photo by Isaac D. Pacheco

BY ISAAC D. PACHECO

Talk it Out

Often the best way to find solutions to challenges is to get people talking. In the case of politics, voters frequently want to hear candidates in a positive dialogue about issues that are important to them. While canned sound bites and media appearances frequently leave something to be desired, the televised debate has remained an important part of the American electoral process, allowing voters a brief, and sometimes revelatory, glimpse into the thought processes behind the candidates stated platforms.

In Albania, where personality-based politics have sometimes led to mudslinging that detracts from the issues that voters value, Department employees sought to move the discourse forward by introducing debates into the electoral process. As part of its Act Now! Initiative, Embassy Tirana's public affairs and political offices worked with USAID to organize debates that would allow Albanian voters to hear directly from the candidates.

Embassy representatives reached out to candidates in each of the parties and provided debate training for participants. A panel of experts selected discussion topics for the debates from more than 500 questions submitted by the public via social media. As a result the public reception of the debates, and the candidates' perceptions of their opponents and the electoral process, was overwhelmingly positive. Be sure to read more about how Embassy Tirana staff worked to elevate the level of discourse in Albanian politics on page 12.

Our cover story looks at one of South America's most successful democracies, Uruguay, and the work the Department is doing there. Embassy Montevideo's small



team of dedicated employees is building off of shared values like education, freedom of the press and human rights to strengthen our bilateral partnership. Read the full story on page 18, and check out additional features in our interactive digital version of the publication.

In honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, this issue also recognizes the work Department employees do to make life better for people with disabilities, who sometimes face a dearth of accessibility and accommodation options. Embassy Kathmandu has launched a comprehensive campaign to increase awareness of disability issues in Nepal, and to increase the quality and availability of assistive services for those who need them. Read more (pg. 10) about how embassy staff members are turning obstacles into opportunities in Nepal. ■

Corrections

September 2013, pg. 5 – The caption for the digital signage article was incorrect. Kevin Rubesh shot the photo in Embassy San Jose's consular waiting room.

pg. 23 – The caption for the photo on page 22 should have identified the subject as DAS Kelly Clements.

pg. 34 – The online version of the layout has been updated to remove unrelated text from the article.



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In the News



Cultural Diplomacy Award Winners Named

In June, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and its partner, the Lois Roth Endowment, announced the winners of the 2013 awards for cultural diplomacy excellence. At a ceremony presided over by Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs Ann Stock and her deputy, Adam Ereli, Roth Endowment Founder Richard T. Arndt said the goal of the awards “is to highlight the importance and effectiveness of cultural diplomacy in reaching foreign policy goals and boost morale among these hardy professionals.”

The awards, begun in 1990, are named for Lois Roth (1931-86), a Fulbright program alumna and U.S. Information Agency officer. They are given to a Foreign Service officer, Civil Service employee and Foreign Service National (FSN) employee.

Arndt, a former cultural affairs officer, cited “the exceptional quality of the 2013 nominees,” which led to a tie between Julia Fendrick and Courtney Beale for the FSO award. Arndt said Fendrick’s tour in Islamabad “showed courage, commitment, energy and decisiveness in all fields,” and “exceptional leadership in academic and professional exchanges for Pakistan.” He said Beale’s work in Mexico “reached out, in the face of budget cuts and real dangers, in varied and imaginative ways to deepen U.S. ties and embellish the image of consulates as community partners.”

The Ilchman-Richardson Award for a Civil Service employee, which honors two former ECA assistant secretaries, went to Julia Walters, senior program officer for English Language Programs. Arndt said Walters’

“skill in recruiting and supporting fellows and teaching assistants for service abroad was impressive. She invigorates and modernizes these programs, drawing on deep understanding of the academic and personal qualities they demand, while showing persistent cultural sensitivity, integrity and generosity.”

The Gill Jacot-Guillarmod Award for an FSN, which honors a recently deceased cultural specialist in South Africa, went to George Beukes, embassy cultural specialist in Windhoek, Namibia. Arndt said Beukes’ activities helped reduce discrimination against disabled youth, destigmatized HIV/AIDS, supported gender equality and resisted pervasive anti-Americanism. “With vision, persuasion and skill, he uses every tool of cultural and educational exchanges to support the worth and dignity of the individual,” said Arndt.

Funded by donations from individuals, many of them veterans of the State Department or USIA, the endowment helps its partners deepen the research dimensions of their work and fosters cross-cultural dialogue.

Joining Senior Program Officer for English Language Programs Julia Walters, as she holds the plaque for the Ilchman-Richardson Prize are, from left, her mother, Dick Arndt, her father and then-Assistant Secretary for Education and Cultural Affairs Ann Stock.

Photo by Anne V. Barbaro

News

Returned Refugees 'Put Down Roots' in Croatia

In July, a team from the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb that included the human rights officer, political assistant, regional legal advisor, assistant regional security officer and summer interns went to the rural Western Slavonia region of Croatia to assist 30 ethnic-Serb families, former refugees who had returned to that nation, plus ethnic-Croat refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

The former refugees are now farmers and were beneficiaries of a \$25,000 grant from the Julia Taft Refugee Fund that underwrites an agricultural project coordinated through the Serb Democratic Forum's (SDF's) Rural Agriculture Cooperative for Returnees. The project encourages refugees to return to Croatia and supports local economic development and regional stability. The grant provided farm machinery, including a harvester and a seed cleaner, so this multi-ethnic community could convert previously unused land into a fruit and nut orchard, whose produce is sold on the open market.

The project has helped revive several towns and villages that were heavily damaged and depopulated during the 1991-95 war.

The farmers told the visiting team of market possibilities arising from Croatia's recent accession to the European Union and the potential to export their produce to Germany. SDF members said economic sustainability is the most important factor in persuading refugees to return.

The project has encouraged ethnic-Serb returnees to stay and is expected to encourage others still living in Serbia to return to their



pre-war homes in this area. The Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration contributed \$10 million in FY 2012 to support a regional housing program that provides durable housing for up to 74,000 of the most vulnerable refugees and displaced persons in BiH, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.

A farmer who benefited from the Taft grant, shows members of the embassy delegation around the farm.

Photo by Jess Kuntz

Summer Interns Get Career Advice

More than 150 interns assembled at the Harry S Truman building July 30 to hear from Department leadership and employee panels, and learn about State Department career opportunities. Then-Director General Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the gathering, "The fact that you are here means that we want you to stay. My goal is to make you want to do this for the rest of your life."

Career advisory panelist Stacy Williams, a foreign affairs officer, advised interns to find a role model and to internalize that person's qualities.

Another panelist, Foreign Service generalist Cherrie Daniels, told interns that personal and professional flexibility are fundamental to success at the Department. All speakers said State Department jobs are challenging and hard to get, but worth it.

Department interns come from all over the United States and work domestically and abroad. Ibraam Nashed and Jacqueline Morea, interned with the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, said they were excited to attend a State Department iftar. Nashed enjoyed "engaging foreign dignitaries in their native language while representing the Department of State."

Kamila Hall, who worked in the Bureau of Administration with a mentor, said that, "as an intern, it is great witnessing the dedication, time and research that is used to help our country continue to move forward." Noreen Murphy, also in the Bureau of Administration, said she was "inspired by how dedicated people are about being at the State Department. Even after 20 years, they're so passionate about the Department's mission."

The speakers emphasized that interns' ongoing commitment to the Department will mold their career paths and the makeup of the Department in years to come. "You all are very different from us," Thomas-Greenfield said. "So what you are will make the Foreign Service what it will be in the next 20 years. You all have your heads on really well. If you are what the future represents, I think that's fantastic."



Gathered at the interns' meeting are, from left, Jacqueline Morea, Ibraam Nashed, and Alexandria Walozak.

Photo by Karen Reitman

Secretary's Photographer Reaches 40 Years of Service

From Secretary of State John Kerry's announcement of renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace talks to then-Secretary Hillary Clinton's historic meeting with Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, through five Secretaries of State and scores of official dinners, there has been one constant: Michael Gross, the Department's official photographer.

Washington, D.C., native Gross began his career in USIA's photo lab as a printer of black and white photos and, later, wall murals. When in 1999 the Bureau of Public Affairs (PA) created a Department photographer position, Gross was selected. He's been chronicling the Secretary and the Department ever since.

On July 17, Gross was recognized for his 40 years of service at PA's annual awards ceremony. After decades of working in close proximity to legends of U.S. diplomacy, Gross is said by colleagues to be modest, but with a taste for fine clothing. Hattie Jones, who has worked with him since his start as official photographer, said he takes his work extremely seriously, but is always even-keeled.

"Despite the pressure of the high-level events Michael photographs, he always seems to effortlessly capture the moment and never seems stressed," she said.

Beyond the Department, Gross took photos at Secretary Madeleine Albright's residence when she received dignitaries. "Secretary Albright adored Michael," said Gladys Boggs, another longtime colleague. "But he's had a really good relationship with all of the Secretaries he photographed."

Gross said he most enjoys swearing-in ceremonies because his pictures capture a moment that is so treasured by the ambassadors and their families.

Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Michael Hammer said Gross's photos are compelling, whether he is working behind the scenes or on the world stage. Hammer said he particularly likes one photo of Secretary Kerry holding his grandson moments before Kerry was sworn in as Secretary.



Typically the man behind the camera, Gross stays true to form in his portrait.
Photo by James Pan

African American Affinity Group Marks 40 Years

In late June, the Thursday Luncheon Group (TLG), an African American employee affinity group for Foreign Service and Civil Service employees, celebrated its 40th anniversary at an event honoring its founders, pioneers, past presidents and retired Ambassador Terence Todman, who received the group's Lifetime Achievement award.

The 230 guests at the event in the packed Benjamin Franklin Room at Main State included ambassadors, senior career diplomats and foreign affairs experts, respected journalists and representatives of U.S. civic organizations.

Ambassador Todman, a native of the U.S. Virgin Islands and six-time ambassador (Chad, Guinea, Costa Rica, Spain, Denmark and Argentina), delivered the keynote address. He challenged the State Department to continue to broaden opportunities for minorities and ensure that the Foreign Service

is representative of the American population.

Retired Ambassador Edward J. Perkins, president of the Association of Black American Ambassadors, surprised TLG President Stacy D. Williams with an award for his three years as president and his organization of the June 28 event.

While ambassador to Spain, Ambassador Todman worked to get Spain admitted to NATO. Ambassador Perkins was the first African American Director General and first African American ambassador to South Africa, where he helped end apartheid.

The TLG hopes to use its 40th anniversary celebration to inspire members to encourage young Americans of all backgrounds to enter the international affairs arena and reflect America's diversity. More information is available online at thursdayluncheon.org. More information on careers in international affairs is at careers.state.gov.



TLG President Williams presents the Lifetime Achievement Award to Amb. Todman.
Photo by James Pan

News

Freetown Welcomes Marines Back to Post One

Sixteen years after the last U.S. Marine left the U.S. Embassy in Freetown during Sierra Leone's brutal decade-long civil war, six Marines have returned to duty at the embassy.

On Aug. 5, Ambassador Michael Owen activated the Marine Security Guard (MSG) program as part of a Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) three-year plan to create new detachments at 35 lock-and-leave posts. He said the Marines' return marked a historic day for the embassy and Sierra Leone.

"You are now important members of Team Salone (Sierra Leone)," Owen told the Marines.

Embassy Freetown was the first of the selected missions to stand up an MSG detachment, doing so in seven months. Activation normally takes two to three years.

Regional Security Officer Jonathan Kazmar said the critical flow of classified information that's necessary for operations in the West Africa environment would not be available to decision-makers without a 24-hour cleared American presence at post. With the MSGs in place, he added, "we are once again a fully robust diplomacy provider."

Since MSGs require housing, office space and a fully equipped Post One, the embassy, DS and the Bureau of Overseas Building Operations had to quickly prepare for the Marines' arrival.

"It's terrific to have Marine Security Guards back in Freetown after such a long gap," Ambassador Owen said. "They are not only enhancing our safety and security, but are already doing their part to boost post morale."



Marine Sergeant Joshua Decker, the first U.S. Marine to serve at Embassy Freetown's reopened Post One, looks on as Ambassador to Sierra Leone Michael Owen, center, hands Detachment Commander Staff Sergeant Cody McGrew a cover worn by the last Marine to leave Freetown 16 years earlier.

Photo by Michael McGuigan

U.S. and The Bahamas Sign Counter-Piracy MOU

Marking The Bahamas' celebration of its 40th year of independence, the United States signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the island nation to cooperate to prosecute suspected pirates.

The MOU, signed in July by acting Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Thomas Kelly and Minister of Foreign Affairs Fredrick Mitchell, provides an international legal framework for prosecuting pirates who attack Bahamian flagged vessels. With more than 1,500 ships on its registry, The Bahamas has a vested interest in ensuring the safe passage of its ships in the Indian Ocean.

Multilateral cooperation has already led to a significant reduction in the number of pirate attacks in the area, and the MOU is seen as a key step to expanding bilateral cooperation on counter-piracy, as well as ensuring protocols and law enforcement mechanisms can respond quickly in the event of a pirate attack.

Assistant Secretary Kelly said he hopes the MOU sets a precedent. "We are honored to participate in this collaboration with The Bahamas and believe that this historic MOU, which is the first between the United States and an international partner, will serve as a model to other nations interested in expanding their roles in the counter-piracy realm," he said.

The anniversary celebration included cultural performances and a tattoo (military drum performance), in which branches of law enforcement and the military present themselves for the Governor General's inspection. There was also a Carnival-like parade with music and dancing at the park where the Bahamian flag was first hoisted July 11, 1973.



Minister of Foreign Affairs Mitchell, left, meets with Acting Assistant Secretary Kelly after signing the historic agreement.

Photo by Bahamas Information Services

Diversity Notes

JOHN M. ROBINSON
OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), which the Department of Labor envisions as a national campaign to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The theme for 2013 is "Because We Are EQUAL to the Task."

Every American employer, including the federal government, has a responsibility to ensure that workers with disabilities have access to employment, career development, promotion opportunities and other employment-related benefits. Such access may include information technology products that work with computer screen-reader software and contain captioning, transportation vehicles that accommodate wheelchairs and motorized scooters, and restrooms equipped with automated door-opening systems. Other types of access may be particular to an individual and take the form of a reasonable accommodation.

Some managers may be unsure of how to respond to an accommodation request. Here are a few practical points to help you understand the role you play in the Department's reasonable accommodation program:

- If a manager receives a request for a reasonable accommodation from an employee or becomes aware of an employee's apparent need for a reasonable accommodation, the manager should contact the Disability/Reasonable Accommodation Division (DRAD) within the Bureau of Human Resources' Office of Employee Relations for guidance. Regulations at 3 FAM 3670 designate DRAD as the decision-maker on all requests for reasonable accommodation. In addition to contacting DRAD, the employee's manager or HR may need to help in any ongoing interactive discussions regarding a requested accommodation.

- DRAD may consult with the employee's manager to determine the essential functions of the job and needs of the office, in connection with identifying possible accommodations. Management can be particularly helpful by thinking outside of the box and considering alternative ways to accomplish the functions of any position. Being open to suggestions of new ways to complete job tasks allows



for creative accommodations that get the job done while allowing employees to do their best work.

- Managers may, in some cases, be able to make minor workplace adjustments on their own initiative and should engage their executive offices, as a ready-made solution may be easily available.

- Managers need information about the employee's functional workplace limitations but not information about the employee's underlying medical condition. They, therefore, should not request, review or retain medical documentation associated with a request for reasonable accommodation.

Employees should also be encouraged to join the Disability Action Group (DAG), one of the Department's many employee affinity groups. The DAG offers employees the opportunity to build support, trust and empowerment through shared experiences and camaraderie. It can be found on Corridor and reached at DAGCouncil@state.gov.

The hiring, promotion and retention of employees with disabilities remains a high priority for the Department. Managers and supervisors have an essential role in the success and prosperity of all their employees including individuals with disabilities, which will in turn produce a strong, agile and diverse workforce. ■

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John M. Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

The Los Cabos Country Council is all smiles after its inaugural meeting
State Department Photo



Overseas Security Council

DOS, private sector cooperate on threats

By Anna Rapp, outreach programs officer, Overseas Security Advisory Council

During the 2011 Arab Spring, the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provided a lifeline of information to U.S. companies in the Middle East, helping protect company personnel and interests during a time of dynamic political and economic change. That same year, the powerful forces of nature posed another type of challenge, as companies turned to OSAC for breaking news in the aftermath of the tsunami and the Fukushima nuclear crisis in Japan.

Today, OSAC is stronger and more relevant than ever, thanks to the collective efforts of its public and private members overseas and in the United States. They began sharing information when OSAC, the brainchild of then-Secretary of State George Shultz, was established in 1985, after Secretary Shultz and a handful of prominent American CEOs discussed their concern over increased security threats to U.S. interests overseas.

The group, led by Secretary Shultz, decided to create a formal mechanism to promote U.S. government-private sector cooperation worldwide on security issues. OSAC was established as a public-private partnership to provide a forum for sharing best practices and the tools to manage the dynamic security environment abroad. Today, OSAC—part of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security in Washington, D.C.—is the world's premier public-private partnership on security issues, with more than 4,500 individual members, including representatives of U.S. companies, nongovernmental organizations, educational institutions and faith-based organizations. OSAC has about 140 country councils worldwide and supports several sector-specific and regional working groups in the United States. It also provides individual security consultations to members and passes along specific credible threat information to U.S. organizations. This

fulfills the Department's "no double standard" policy that requires the same security information made available to official Americans also be shared with private American citizens.

OSAC is a federal advisory committee, as defined by the 1972 Federal Advisory Committee Act, which called for open meetings, chartering, public involvement and reporting. OSAC is made up of 30 private sector and four public sector member organizations and is chaired by Gregory Starr, director of the Diplomatic Security Service, and co-chaired by James Snyder, chief security officer at Conoco Phillips.

The OSAC Annual Briefing, held each November in Washington, D.C., is traditionally the largest event at the Department of State; in 2012, more than 1,300 security professionals attended. Speakers included Ambassador Jon Huntsman, Deputy Secretary of State Thomas R. Nides, Ambassador J. Cofer Black and Commissioner of the National Football League Roger Goodell.

OSAC also hosts meetings of the Pan-Asia Regional Council in San Francisco and the Latin America Regional Council in Miami, and recently launched an Africa Regional Council hosted in Chicago. Its New York Forum focuses on international security concerns relevant to private sector organizations based in New York, New Jersey or Connecticut. OSAC also hosts training and events for eight sector-specific working groups in such areas as academia, aviation, faith and international development.

The most fundamental and longest running OSAC outreach initiative is the Country Councils program. On any given day, OSAC Country Councils are bringing together the security staff of U.S. missions with overseas employees of U.S.-based organizations. OSAC

supports councils in such far-flung locations as Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, and Atyrau, Kazakhstan, and in such high-threat posts as Baghdad and Lahore. Councils range in size from 10 members in Luxembourg to more than 300 in Kabul, but all have the same goal: supporting information sharing on security concerns.

A council's leadership always includes the post's regional security officer (RSO) and often a private sector co-chair and steering committee. In some locations, subcommittees manage various initiatives. In Tijuana, for example, OSAC's hospitality, entertainment and tourism subcommittee recently launched a spin-off council in Los Cabos, Mexico, to address the needs of a rapidly growing tourism sector.

Some councils, such as the Netherlands Country Council, provide a singular venue for all U.S. organizations in the country. Boston Police Chief Daniel Linskey recently spoke on the Boston Marathon attack at the Netherlands council.

"Given the robust presence of virtually every major American corporation in the Netherlands, OSAC plays a vital role in connecting corporate CEOs and security chiefs with the embassy and senior Dutch government law enforcement and security officials," said Edwin R. Nolan, the departing chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in The Hague. "Thanks to the Netherlands' position as an international cyber hub, OSAC members have been especially grateful for our many events focused on cybercrime and how to combat it."

While some countries have only one OSAC, others have councils throughout the country, at U.S. consulates. India, for example, has active chapters in Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata and New Delhi. Every year, these councils hold a joint all-India meeting. There are also country councils throughout Mexico.

The most active OSAC in Africa is at the U.S. Embassy in Lagos, a chapter that recently created a Gulf of Guinea Working Group that brings together maritime constituents to collaboratively address emerging threats. "From incident reporting to briefing AFRICOM on private sector security challenges in the Gulf, their efforts have heightened the level of security for member interests and strengthened maritime security in the region," said RSO Rene Crowningshield.

Country councils in war zones, where organizations may face daily threats and be specifically targeted, are often the largest and most dynamic. The Baghdad Council disseminates a daily intelligence report to members that includes information from the embassy and private sector reporting.

Some councils are launched after a major security event. For instance, in the wake of the Burgas terror attack in eastern Bulgaria



Above: The Defense attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat, John Grewelle, teaches participants how to pack a "go-bag" during an emergency preparedness seminar.

Photo by Embassy Ashgabat

Below: RSOs from each of the nine U.S. consulates throughout Mexico attend a September 2010 meeting with the OSAC Mexico City Country Council.

Photo by Embassy Mexico City

in 2012, Seth Green, RSO at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia, launched the Bulgaria Country Council.

Many country councils prove most useful during a crisis, when members use them to rapidly share information as it develops. In evacuation situations, such as during the Arab Spring, company members who owned private airplanes or ships provided passage for the staff of smaller organizations.

"Today, the mission of OSAC, with its Country Councils program, is more critical than ever," said Director Starr. "Continued and evolving threats place at risk our overseas missions, as well as American innovation, education and humanitarian efforts. OSAC Country Councils are fundamental in safeguarding American lives and interests overseas, and I hope that post leadership across the world will support local programs."

For more information on OSAC Country Councils, contact Aiste Ray, OSAC team lead for Outreach and Engagement. ■





Enabling Access

Embassy helps Nepal overcome challenges

By Scott Sanford, political officer, and Robert Domaingue, information officer, U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu

The dramatic mountain scenery, terraced rice fields, tiger-filled jungles and traditional culture that make Nepal an exotic travel destination also make life difficult for people with disabilities, often forcing them onto society's margins. To help, the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu has worked closely with the Nepali government to address the main issues facing those with disabilities. These include lack of an appropriate and accessible infrastructure or of rehabilitation services and limited awareness among health practitioners, parents and the public. The embassy's development assistance and public outreach are making a difference.

Nepal's streets, sidewalks, bathrooms, entrances and other structures are generally not accessible to those with physical disabilities. Braille signs or schoolbooks are not available. As for public awareness, many Nepalis believe that someone who is disabled is suffering for misdeeds in a past life or that intellectual disabilities are somehow contagious, spread through human contact. There is even a lack of awareness about intellectual disabilities and mental health issues among some medical professionals, who cannot diagnose the disability or provide appropriate early intervention and therapy.

The government of Nepal, despite the lack of resources and not

having an elected parliament for more than a year, has initiated several programs to advance the rights of people with disabilities. The Ministry for Women, Children and Social Welfare has launched an education program about disability rights throughout Nepal and has pushed to make recent road-widening projects friendly to those with disabilities. The government-run Mental Health Hospital in Kathmandu conducts training programs for health volunteers in remote areas of the districts surrounding Kathmandu, where the volunteers learn to identify people with mental health issues and refer them to the hospital if necessary. Several ministries have started modest support for rehabilitation for the physically disabled.

For its part, Embassy Kathmandu has initiated a vigorous outreach campaign to raise disability awareness. During a recent visit to a remote area in far western Nepal, staff members toured a rehabilitation center funded by the Leahy War Victims Fund that provides prosthetics and physiotherapy to people with disabilities. The highly publicized visit highlighted the U.S. commitment to disability rights. Embassy personnel also participated in public marches through Kathmandu in honor of World Down Syndrome Day and gave speeches on the challenges facing people with intellectual disabilities

in the United States and how advocates have overcome those obstacles.

Embassy Kathmandu's development assistance to Nepal addresses a range of programs to promote awareness, skill development and advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities. With Nepal's national elections set to take place in November, mission priorities have been to help ensure polling booths are accessible and provide leadership training for the disabled.

One program, to support the election participation of approximately 24,000 people with disabilities, works with national bodies governing the elections to form and enforce disabled-friendly electoral policies. Locally, it ensures that people with disabilities are able to participate in community-level decision making while preparing them for leadership roles.

The embassy also funds a six-year grant to provide rehabilitation services at five centers around Nepal. The centers are on schedule to treat at least 30,000 people by 2016, including those who became disabled during the 10-year conflict from 1996 to 2006.

To develop leaders among disability advocates, the embassy has hosted two digital video conferences (DVCs). In the first, disabilities expert Helena Berger spoke to 70 disabled rights advocates on the significance of the Americans with Disabilities Act and best practices learned from developing that legislation. In the second, American Erik Weißenmayer, the first blind person to summit Mt. Everest, spoke on the stigmas, challenges and discrimination he had to overcome for his expedition. Participants in both DVCs said they will use some of the strategies discussed to advance their own advocacy.

The embassy also hosted Ananta Ram Baidya, a Nepali-American civil engineer from California, who spoke to 65 local engineers, architects, government officials and disability rights activists on inexpensive modifications that can be made to sidewalks, roads and buildings to make them more accessible. Government officials at the event committed to work toward making Kathmandu's sidewalks more accessible.

The embassy has ensured that people with disabilities participate in its training and exchange opportunities. This year, the embassy nominated a government official who is blind and works with government benefits for the disabled to participate in an International Visitor Leadership Program, which will give her greater insight into how such benefits are determined in the United States.

One disabled participant in the Near East and South Asia Undergraduate Exchange Program for Nepali students has since become a leading advocate for disability rights in Nepal—a great achievement given his relative youth in a culture where advanced age is often a prerequisite for leadership roles. The embassy's Youth Council also aims to develop the leadership abilities of its members with disabilities, who are applying what they have learned to their advocacy and public education work.

To facilitate dialogue between disability rights advocates and government officials, the embassy recently hosted a roundtable discussion where activists and officials worked to create a strategic plan based on the Rights of People with Disabilities, so that everyone can



Opposite: In Nepal, many wheelchair users are unable to easily get aboard buses.

Photo by Punya Ram Prajapati

Above: A Nepalese girl participates in a Down Syndrome awareness event.

Photo by Embassy Kathmandu

Below: Rarely do Nepalese wheelchair users find a safe lane of travel on the streets.

Photos by Ananta Ram Baidya



lead a life with dignity. Participants agreed to focus their advocacy and policy work on health training (including intellectual disabilities and mental health issues), participation in the upcoming elections, increasing awareness about disabilities and ensuring the nation's draft Disability Rights Act is enacted. Government representatives, in turn, agreed to provide a contact person for disability rights.

Due to persistent embassy advocacy, continuous lobbying by civil society organizations and the government's increased awareness of the issue, the rights of those with disabilities are receiving more attention in Nepal. Despite the nation's poverty and rugged terrain, success stories are becoming more common. Throughout Nepal, "people with disabilities have been praising the U.S. Embassy's initiative on disability issues," said Ramchandra Gaihre, disability coordinator at the NGO FocusED Nepal. "The opportunity to exchange views with government officials and discuss international best practices is having an important impact. I look forward to more such programs in the near future." ■

A Better Argument



Debates inspire issue-based Albanian election process

By Jay Porter, political officer, U.S. Embassy in Tirana

Although the Albanian government has changed significantly since the fall of communism in 1991, the political culture remains personality-based. During election season, political parties traditionally focus on political leaders and gaining popular support, rather than building platforms and campaigning on issues. Candidates often engage in personal attacks and fail to address issues important to voters, such as economic improvement, crime, corruption and employment.

Consequently, prior to the June 23 national elections, many Albanian voters could not name the candidates, but couldn't say what they stood for.

Prior to the election, I visited several high schools to discuss the role of social media in politics and how televised presidential debates had evolved in the United States. Students often said they wished Albanian candidates would debate on television but did not think it could ever happen. Most said that leaders of the political parties would never agree to an uncontrolled debate with their rivals, and some thought such an event would quickly devolve into uncontrollable mudslinging.

Nevertheless, the youths said televised debates would give young voters an opportunity to break from family voting traditions and make a

more educated decision in the coming elections.

With that in mind, U.S. Embassy in Tirana staffers began discussing how to support the upcoming elections. The public affairs, political and USAID offices recognized the need for an issues-based campaign and a public debate that would force party representatives to take positions on issues and develop platforms. Then, voters could choose among ideas and proposals, not just personalities.

As part of its Act Now! Initiative, which aims to improve citizens' dialogue with elected officials, the embassy approached leaders from the nation's five largest political parties and offered to sponsor Albania's first televised campaign debates with members from the party youth wings. All parties agreed to participate.

To organize the debates, initiative coordinator Elizabeth Barnhart worked with Dr. Christine Standerfer, a J. William Fulbright scholar and associate professor of Communication at the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service.

To ready them for the debate, Standerfer spent six weeks training 14 young leaders from the five parties to present and defend their positions. Deputy Chief of Mission Henry Jardine temporarily converted his living room into a debate training center for the participants, who met with several embassy officers, including the ambassador.

Many debate participants also received training and advice from their party leaders, members of parliament and local universities. Municipal governments in Tirana, Shkodër and Fier provided space for the three debates, which took place in April and May and were aired on three television stations. Popular evening talk show host Ilva Tare moderated the final debate in Tirana.

For the debates, the embassy collected via its Facebook page more than 500 questions, marking the first time the public was able to directly address party representatives during an election campaign. A panel of experts selected the topics for each debate. Questions, which were kept sealed until the event, covered important issues such as employment, education, rule of law and the economy.

Each debate attracted broad media attention, and many political leaders attended, including two former presidents, members of parliament, party leaders, ambassadors and media representatives. For many of those watching via TV, it was their first opportunity to hear the parties' platforms. Most important, the three debates showed the next generation of political leaders and voters how to conduct responsible political discourse in a civil and respectful manner.

The public response was overwhelmingly positive. "This is the future," said one commenter on the embassy's Facebook page. "We should learn from the most democratic country in the world! Thank you to the embassy, [and] the Ambassador and his staff for this initiative."

Many politicians commented on how the young debaters formulated their cases within the time allotted and without engaging in personal attacks.

Prior to the final debate, U.S. Ambassador Alexander Arvizu said, "Depending on how a politician performs in the course of a debate, or a series of them, an obscure candidate can become a viable contender almost overnight. Or a front-runner can suffer a sudden plunge in the poll numbers." Sometimes, he continued, "an election is won or lost based on the public's perception of the debate performance."

"A democracy can function properly only when the rules of the game are observed, and when the citizens make informed choices about their elected representatives," he observed.

The debates had a positive effect on the campaigning, with several international observer groups noting that the 2013 election campaigns included much more issue-based debate and discussion than before. Following the debates, party leaders held town hall meetings around the country to discuss some of the same platforms and proposals youth debaters presented on television. The nation's prime minister and opposition leaders began engaging voters through their Facebook profiles.

Participants said the debates had the potential to change Albania's political landscape. "This type of debate is a strong blow to old politics," said debater Indrit Sefa. "This format focuses on the fact that politicians should serve the citizens, and not the other way around." Sefa said politicians should be accountable for what they promise, and that removing personal insults from a campaign is a major step forward.

Most of the debate participants got to know each other, and said they found it difficult to attack their opponents. Elinda Guri, a Socialist Party debater, said, "These debates are the end result of training to be constructive, build cases and refute arguments without being offensive. During training, we learned that we each have core values. Now we are friends with each other; what we are debating are political arguments and the means by which we will fulfill our promises."

After the debates, two parties included members of their debate team on their candidate list for the elections. Depending on post-election appointments within the new government, Kejdi Mehmehtaj, who participated in the live debate in Tirana on May 3, could be seated in the new Parliament. At 19, she is only one year over the minimum eligibility age and would be the youngest parliamentarian in Albania's history.

It wouldn't be surprising if, a few short years from now, several others whom the embassy trained in these debates became elected leaders, playing their part in making public debate a part of Albania's vibrant, democratic future. ■



Above: Christine Standerfer, standing, presents models of effective debating to participants at a training at the DCM's residence. **Opposite:** Debate moderator, talk show host Ilva Tare, presents the last question on EU accession during the live televised debate in Tirana May 3.

Photos by Robert Manga



Above: DCM Henry Jardine welcomes the trainers to a debate training session at his residence. **Below:** Ambassador Alexander Arvizu, right, speaks with debate participants prior to the first televised debate in Shkodër, Albania.

Photos by Robert Manga





Fire and Ice



Posts use cultural diplomacy to engage host nationals

By Derie Gilzeane, information specialist, Embassy Kingston, and Rodney M. Hunter, political/economic section chief, Embassy Helsinki

Foreign Service officers worldwide often conduct diplomacy by taking advantage of their host nation's cultural highlights. In Finland, for instance, that means using the saunas to build contacts. In the much warmer climate of Jamaica, meetings take place while enjoying a meal featuring local, often home-grown foods.

Thus in January, 20 young Jamaican men from impoverished and high-crime communities in Kingston took part in a 10-week apprenticeship in culinary arts sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Kingston. Participants gained the skills and confidence to work in Jamaica's commercial kitchens and restaurants, a top area of employment. Some ended the program working with American chefs to prepare the food for the embassy's Independence Day celebration.

Funded by a grant administered by the public affairs section (PAS), the program had three phases, each with specific objectives. During phase one, students attended classes on food preparation and food safety policies and procedures, and completed practical modules and a practicum in entry-level cooking.

Then, students were placed at restaurants in Kingston to perfect their skills and gain on-the-job experience. Supervising chefs offered feedback and emotional guidance and served as role models.

The young men also took classes in basic reading, writing and

English skills, often using culinary examples.

In addition, three executive chefs from Marriott Hotels in the United States joined Ambassador Pamela Bridgewater's Jamaican executive chef George Matthews and Deputy Chief of Mission Raymond Brown's executive chef Nicholas Beckford in a special four-day program with 12 of the student chefs July 1-4. The student chefs participated in the mission's 4th of July celebration by preparing dishes from around America. They donned their chef jackets and hats, and served the food they had prepared.

PAS-organized media coverage reached more than two million people, and the publicity and photos boosted the students' confidence.

In all, the program gave at-risk youth sound role models, boosted their self-discipline and gave them the technical expertise to become the future of culinary excellence in Jamaica.

In Finland, staff of the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki will sometimes be found conducting diplomacy in the sauna, a pillar of Finnish culture. Saunas are small wooden rooms heated by a wood or electric stove to between 160 and 200 degrees Fahrenheit, where one sweats alongside others, while occasionally adding water to heated stones to produce steam.



Left and Above: Student chefs prepare meals, and serve guests at Embassy Kingston's July 4th celebration. *Photos by Cleo Walker* **Opposite Right:** At a sauna on the outskirts of Helsinki, Ambassador Oreck, right, relaxes with colleagues. *Photo by John David Malesky* **Opposite Left:** The Executive Chef of the Marriott Marquis New York City, Armando Monterosso, center, talks technique with student chef Glenmore Brown. *Photo by Cleo Walker* **Below:** From left Senior Political Officer Jeremy Barnum, Finnish executive Seppo Pukkila, Ambassador Bruce Oreck and Political/Economic Chief Rodney Hunter relax at the sauna after a plunge in the Baltic Sea. *Photo by John David Malesky*



"Sitting in the sauna has an equalizing effect," said Ambassador Bruce Oreck. "It doesn't matter if you are the president or a student, ambassador or an entry-level officer—you are all on the same level. From there, a good conversation can begin."

For the Finns the sauna isn't for work; they may not even speak to those around them, and those who do speak often find conversation eased by heated relaxation. Afterward, some take an invigorating plunge into the ice-cold water of the Baltic Sea, and then return to the sauna for another round of heat.

It is only after a few cold plunges and several visits in the sauna that business with contacts is conducted, often around a small fire, eating

Finnish food and having a beer. Conversations are relaxed and open, and distractions are few.

Finnish friends and contacts often help mission staff overcome initial unease and embrace the sauna, which has become integral to Embassy Helsinki's interactions.

Cultural diplomacy in its many forms helps the Department achieve its goals of building closer, more effective relationships with people around the world. Whether inside a kitchen or a sauna, innovative programs like those in Kingston and Helsinki continue to move dialogue forward and build bridges between the embassies and their surrounding communities. ■



Talking Tolerance

Office promotes religious freedom worldwide

By Amber McIntyre, foreign affairs officer, Office of International Religious Freedom

In May, Secretary of State John Kerry announced the release of the Department's 2012 International Religious Freedom Report by noting the unique role freedom of religion played in the creation of the United States and the importance it plays in U.S. foreign policy.

"I am making certain, and will continue to, that religious freedom remains an integral part of our global diplomatic engagement," he said.

The annual report to Congress has been required since passage of the International Religious Freedom Act in 1998, which also established the Office of International Religious Freedom (IRF) within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), as well as the position of ambassador at large for International Religious Freedom, currently held by Suzan Johnson Cook. IRF also supports newly appointed Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Ira Forman.

"I'm very proud of the work of the IRF office, and I truly appreciate the daily passion and commitment of my wonderful staff," said Ambassador Johnson Cook. "Because of our efforts, we've truly been able to elevate religious freedom as an issue critical to the Department's security and foreign policy objectives."

Ambassador Johnson Cook, Director Kari Johnstone and Deputy

Director Brian Bachman lead an office of 23 staff members, split into five regional teams. Robert Boehme, senior coordinator for the IRF report, manages a team of four senior editors and two seasonal contract employees. The office's mix of Foreign Service and Civil Service staff, fellows, student employees, retired Foreign Service officers and interns all work closely with regional bureaus and U.S. missions to achieve the office's mandate of promoting religious freedom as a core objective of U.S. foreign policy.

IRF develops policies and programs, monitors and reports on abuses of religious freedom and models of peaceful co-existence and tolerance, and advocates for those experiencing religious persecution and discrimination around the world. Often, this requires working closely with other governments, religious and human rights NGOs, and victims of religious oppression.

For Kyle Ballard, a foreign affairs officer who leads the Middle East team, meetings with persecuted minorities in countries like Egypt and Iran helped frame the importance of the office's work. "It was those meetings that put a human face on all of the reports of religious persecution and the true suffering that occurs when people's rights are abused," he said.

Warren Cofsky, the longest serving Civil Service employee, agrees that people-to-people diplomacy is a core component of his work. “Knowing the people and hearing their stories helps inspire and motivate me to continue the work we do here,” he said.

IRF is at the forefront of reporting troubling trends like the increasing use of blasphemy and apostasy laws, discrimination against Muslims and the rise in anti-Semitism. Through DRL’s programming office, IRF addresses these and other challenges by supporting programs that empower local groups to address religious freedom and human rights abuses in their own backyards. Such programs are under way in Nigeria, Pakistan and Indonesia.

IRF helped strengthen the voice of Iraq’s minority communities within the government of Iraq and the nation’s civil society groups by funding a program with the Alliance of Iraqi Minorities (AIM), a grassroots organization of political and civic leaders from Iraq’s minority communities. AIM’s program reformed an elementary and intermediate school curriculum to include information about all Iraqi religious minorities and dispel religious stereotypes in textbooks.

IRF also develops strategies with other governments to repeal or prevent laws that violate or restrict religious freedom and expression. In 2011, IRF played an active role in securing adoption of U.N. Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18, which encourages countries to take concrete actions to protect the rights of minority religious communities. IRF’s engagement helped to ensure that the resolution focused on promoting tolerance and respect for religious diversity without restricting free speech.

IRF is now working with missions abroad to promote implementation of the resolution. For example, DRL coordinates with the Department of Justice to implement a training program in various countries that aids governments in training local officials in engagement, cultural awareness of religious minorities and enforcing nondiscrimination laws.

Over the past several years, IRF has also promoted the rights of women. In locations where men dominate formal religious leadership structures, IRF works to ensure that women are empowered to share their perspectives and advocate for their needs and those of their communities. This includes work on child marriage and polygamy.

“It’s been fascinating to see just how connected religious freedom is to the rights and status of women and girls worldwide,” said FSO Beth Huse Neil. “I’m very proud of the work our office has done to acknowledge women as critical partners in peace building and promoting human rights, including religious freedom.”

In September, IRF co-hosted an interagency FSI roundtable to discuss ways female faith leaders can promote international religious freedom and other issues. In 2014, IRF will launch a “Female Faces of Faith” initiative focused on the role women play in mitigating sectarian violence and building more harmonious communities.

This commitment to direct engagement with civil society is central to the office’s work. On his first day on the job, Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Forman flew to Poland to join a group of imams and Muslim scholars from around the globe who were touring Nazi death camps. Many of the imams noted that they returned home to share stories and positive messages on combating Holocaust denial and all forms of anti-Semitism.

“What was perhaps most memorable about the trip was the determination displayed by these faith leaders to do what was in their power to make the world aware of what happened and to ensure that it never happens again,” said Forman.

As Secretary Kerry put it at the release of the International Religious Freedom Report, there are trending problems but also cause for hope—thanks in part to IRF and its report.

“While serious challenges to religious freedom remain,” he said, “I also could not be more optimistic about the prospects for freedom around the world, because there are great prospects for accountability around the world.” ■



Top: Warren Cofsky is a Foreign Affairs Officer covering the Bureau of Near Eastern and Asian Affairs; **Below:** Office Director is Kari Johnstone welcomes a visitor to her office. *Photos by Ed Warner* **Opposite:** Ambassador at Large Johnson Cook meets with the sisters of St. Peter’s Chapel in Hanoi, Vietnam in 2012. *Photo by Clara Davis*





Post of the Month

MON



THE VIDEO

Opportunities Abound in Uruguay's Tranquil Capital

Story and Photos by Isaac D. Pacheco





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aris has the famous tree-lined Champs-Élysées, Las Vegas the “Strip” with its glittering neon. Montevideo, Uruguay, has La Rambla. The lesser known but similarly beloved avenue is more than just a scenic thoroughfare winding along Montevideo’s coastline; it is an integral part of the city’s identity and culture. Whether taking a dip in the bay, admiring the sunset under palm trees or going out for a nighttime bike ride, Montevideo’s residents have built their community around this iconic beachside roadway.

Located on the northern bank of the Rio de la Plata estuary, Montevideo is one of South America’s most tranquil national capitals. The laid-back, culturally vibrant metropolis is home to approximately 1.6 million residents, nearly half of Uruguay’s total population. The city serves as the seat of government for one of South America’s most stable democracies, and features a well-developed infrastructure and thriving economy.

“Uruguay is an important player in Latin America and in global affairs, and is therefore an important partner of the United States,” said U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay Julissa Reynoso. “Democratically, it’s a model for the region, and it’s doing really well economically. We have strong trade relations with Uruguay, and it’s a place where American investments and business do well.”

Montevideo is Uruguay’s primary port, situated along a major Atlantic Ocean shipping route between Brazil and Argentina. The



Above Left: Customers cram into one of the many restaurants in Montevideo’s popular Port Market (Mercado del Puerto) for a chance to eat some world-class parrilla.



Above Right: A girl practices longboarding in a skate park near Playa Ramirez.

city’s strategic location has made it a major cultural center and, over the centuries, a coveted jewel in the crown of several empires that fought to gain control of the city. Montevideo’s architecture reflects this colonial heritage and is also influenced by 20th century Art Deco and Modernism styles.

If architecture is the heart of the capital’s distinctive aesthetic charm, then the city’s residents are the pulse that brings it to life. Whether gathering together for social events on La Rambla, sipping maté from distinctive gourds in the city’s myriad parks, or celebrating feasts at one of Mercado del Puerto’s (Port Market) numerous parrilladas (barbecue restaurants), Montevideo’s residents seem to truly understand how to wring the most out of life.

“Uruguay is a beautiful country with wonderful people who are receptive to Americans, [and] very receptive to foreigners in general,” said Thomas Lloyd, the embassy’s deputy chief of mission. “It’s an exciting place with lots of things to see and do.”

On weekends, many residents flock to the traditional ferias (street markets) scattered throughout the city’s distinct barrios. Situated in the heart of the Cordón neighborhood, La Feria de Tristán Narvaja is by far the city’s largest street market, stretching many blocks from iconic 18 de Julio Avenue through La Paz Street. Locals and tourists alike crowd the curio-lined alleyways on Sunday mornings in search of everything from fresh produce to exotic antiques. Due to its sheer size, the maze-like market is an easy place for a first-timer to get lost. But the challenge of finding the exit is half the adventure.

Another popular feria is located in Parque Rodó, one of the city’s many lush green spaces named after notable Uruguayan citizens. This smaller market is adjacent to La Rambla across from Playa Ramirez,



Above: A barbeque pit master (*asador*) prepares a selection of meats on a one of the city’s ubiquitous wood-fired grills (*Parrillas*) in Parque Rodó. **Previous:** A man relaxes on a bench astride a stretch of La Rambla that passes by Playa de los Pocitos.



Plaza Independencia, a historic public square in Montevideo's Old City (Ciudad Vieja), is home to a number of significant buildings including the unique Palacio Salvo, above right.

making it ideal for a stroll on a lazy Sunday morning. Food lovers, especially, are sure to be enticed by the smell of asado (grilled meat) wafting up through the trees from the giant parrilla located at the center of the market. The selection of grilled meats available at the massive, smoking grill is truly a carnivore's dream.

A smaller feria in Parque Juan Zorrilla de San Martín (named after an acclaimed Uruguayan poet and national hero) takes place on Saturday mornings on the eastern side of Punta Carretas. Surrounded by a primarily residential neighborhood, this feria is popular with locals as a place to bargain-shop for the freshest fruits and vegetables, as well as assorted household sundries.

"The culture here is really open and kind, and it's very, very easy to get out and travel around, even without having a wealth of understanding of the Spanish language," said Megan Gernes, community liaison office coordinator. "We have so many cultural and outdoor opportunities in particular that are just not found in other places. This post is a really great place to work and raise a family."

Despite Uruguay's small geographic size compared with its neighbors, the country packs a big punch in international affairs and democracy-related issues. Ambassador Reynoso leads a team of 62 direct-hire Americans and approximately 170 Locally Employed Staff that works in close collaboration with businesses, civic leaders and government officials to advance U.S. policy objectives in the region and strengthen the bilateral partnership.

"There is perhaps a perception that because it's a small country, a small post, there may not be a lot of things going on. But there's a lot going on," said Reynoso. "We have a really diverse and dynamic group of people here who are very well complemented by extremely senior and sophisticated local staff with years of experience."

Uruguay has a market-oriented economy in which the government still plays a significant role. The country's economy averaged a vigorous 6 percent growth annually from 2003 to 2011. Uruguay has worked to reinvent its agriculture-centric export market to include a broader range of commodities, and today the country is a leading exporter of rice and soy. It has also begun investing in the software industry, information technology and global services.

As Uruguay's economy has prospered, imports from the United



Above: Ambassador Reynoso visits Liceo Jubilar, an education center that provides tutoring, mentorship for kids in a high-crime, underprivileged area on the outskirts of Montevideo. **Photo by Pablo Castro Below:** A colorful selection of fresh produce awaits shoppers at La Feria de Tristán Narvaja.



Left: A side street in Ciudad Vieja reflects some of Montevideo's old-world charm. **Above:** Man and best friend hang out together on a sea wall overlooking Playa Ramírez. **Below:** Ambassador Reynoso with members of the Ballet Folklórico Danzas Tacuarembó, a traditional dance troupe, who performed at the official residence for a reception for all Uruguayan alumni of State Department funded exchange programs. *Photo by Pablo Castro*



States have risen steadily. Throughout the past four years, the United States has maintained a trade surplus of between \$400 million and \$600 million. In 2011, the United States was Uruguay's eighth largest export destination and fourth largest supplier of goods, including fuels, high-tech equipment and heavy and agricultural machinery.

"Although Uruguay is a small market, it is part of a broader region here in South America that's growing very quickly," said Kevin Skillin, economic and commercial section chief at Embassy Montevideo. "Uruguay can be a base for a larger market here and in the region. We're trying to encourage U.S. exporters to look at Uruguay as a place that can be a hub for exporting into Brazil, into Argentina, even into places like Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile and so forth."

As a founding member of MERCOSUR, the Southern Cone trading bloc that includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Venezuela, Uruguay offers U.S. companies significant advantages as a regional distribution platform. Montevideo is home to the MERCOSUR Secretariat, located only blocks from the embassy.

"To have a partner that wants to work with us and wants to do business with us is a very good thing," said Skillin. "So we want to keep

doing business and interacting with Uruguay in a way that's positive for both sides."

Aside from strengthening the economic ties between the United States and Uruguay, Department employees at the embassy work to build upon shared values, including education and human rights. One of the primary missions set forth in the integrated country strategy is supporting Uruguayan institutions that advance justice and democracy.

"Uruguay has such a long-standing tradition as a highly functioning democracy [and] the rare distinction of being one of only two countries classified as full democracies in Latin America by the Economist magazine's respected democracy index," said Will Owen, political and economic counselor at Embassy Montevideo. "That is the bedrock of our close relations. It's really what enables the possibility of such close relations between two otherwise totally different countries."

To more effectively shape policy decisions, the embassy engages with members of the population through a variety of programs. By maintaining an active dialogue with the Uruguayan people, embassy staff members are able to glean a better understanding of the issues important to them.



Click here to watch a time-lapse video of sunset in Montevideo.

Montevideo's skyline rises up along the coast of the Río de la Plata as seen from the city's tallest building, Torre de las Telecomunicaciones.



“The public affairs section focuses on not just speaking, but also listening to people to help inform our policies and give stakeholders back in Washington and our ambassador a better understanding of what Uruguayans are thinking about on a day-to-day basis,” said Carissa Gonzalez, deputy public affairs officer. “Whatever we’re doing and whatever we’re offering, in terms of aid or in terms of relationships and agreements, needs to be something that resonates.”

One area where Uruguayans consistently look to the embassy for support is visa processing. With travel to the United States in high demand, the embassy’s small consular affairs (CA) section often serves as the public face for the mission. The full-service CA section provides the same types of services found at other U.S. consular sections, although generally on a smaller scale. In 2012, its staff conducted an average of 120 interviews each day and processed 21,515 nonimmigrant visas and more than 100 immigrant visas.

“It’s a very easy place to do consular work, normally,” said Samuel Madsen, consular section chief. “Our relations with the local government are very good; we have most of the services you’d find in

any developed country. Medical care is excellent, transportation links are generally good and half the population is concentrated along the coast. So we don’t have to usually travel too far if we have an issue.”

Despite the lively pace of operations at the embassy, post leadership strives to provide junior Foreign Service officers with opportunities to diversify their portfolios, cross-train, and perform in-cone work if they are currently in an out-of-cone assignment.

“In my section, I have two officers working for me,” Madsen said. “During their time here they will both have an opportunity to work in all aspects of consular work. Plus, they’ll probably have a chance to do more outside diplomatic-type work than most people would in other embassies.

“If someone is really anxious to build a career in the Department, wants to have a lot of experiences, wants to do a lot of real, hands-on diplomacy, this is actually an excellent post for doing that, particularly for young officers, because it is a small mission,” he added. “Everybody has to be involved with all of the issues.” ■



Post of the Month



At a Glance

Uruguay

Capital: Montevideo

Government type: constitutional republic

Area: 176,015 sq km

Comparative area: slightly smaller than Washington State

Population: 3,324,460

Languages: Spanish, Portuguese, Brazilian

Religions: Roman Catholic, non-Catholic Christians, nondenominational, Jewish

GDP per capita: \$16,200

Export partners: Brazil, China, Argentina, Germany

Export commodities: beef, soybeans, cellulose, rice, wheat, wood, dairy products, wool

Import commodities: refined oil, crude oil, passenger and other vehicles, vehicle parts, cellular phones

Import partners: China, Argentina, Brazil, U.S., Paraguay

Currency: Uruguayan pesos

Internet country code: .uy

Source: The World Factbook



Amish 'Homecoming'

South Sudan journalists learn secrets of small-scale farming

By Kevin Krug, contract producer, Office of Broadcast Services, Bureau of Public Affairs

"Something strange is happening," said Alex Taban, a television cameraman from South Sudan, as he looked out the window of the van taking him past the rolling hills and green pastures of northeastern Ohio. Taban turned to the backseat where his colleague, TV reporter Henry Jada John, also had a look of recognition and confusion. After three days and more than 7,000 miles of travel, the duo was far from their African home and deep in rural Amish country, but somehow it felt instantly familiar.

"This is like we are coming home," said John.

Taban and John, driven by their American TV producer, pulled into a driveway at the Dalton, Ohio, home of an Amish patriarch. They'd come to learn the secrets of traditional farming, information they'll bring home to help transform their country's agriculture. A figure in a wide-brimmed hat emerged from the cleanly trimmed house and approached, hand extended.

The Sudanese visitors, both 33, are journalists with South Sudan TV, the official government station of the Republic of South Sudan. After emerging from a 50-year civil war with Sudan, South Sudan celebrated its independence two years ago. The two reporters were selected to be their nation's first television journalists to visit the United States under a Department of State grant.

Their mission, coordinated with officials of the U.S. Embassy in Juba and the Bureau of Public Affairs' Office of Broadcast Services in Washington, D.C., was to make a series of reports on sustainable U.S. agriculture. For two weeks they learned about small-scale farming

methods, including organic farming; market gardens run by women; and the use of animals for pulling power, such as on an Amish farm.

The Amish man who greeted them and was to be their guide is Wayne Wengerd, 58, owner of Pioneer Equipment. "If Alex and Henry take the trouble to come all this way, and to learn from us, I feel it's our duty to be the best hosts we can be," he said. For the next five days, Wengerd introduced them to numerous Amish farmers who shared their agricultural expertise.

Wengerd escorted them around the property. "The trees, the crops, the fields, the way the land looks—it's just like in South Sudan," said Taban, a tall man with deep-set eyes and an exuberant talking style. John is shorter and more reserved, his English more formal. (English is South Sudan's official language, but dozens of Arabic dialects are also spoken.)

Despite the long journey, both visitors were dressed immaculately, with crisp pants, collared shirts and narrow-toed leather shoes. Though jet-lagged, they couldn't stop smiling, as if unable to believe their good fortune.

They told Wengerd and his two eldest sons that South Sudan is rich in arable land, but only 4 percent is under cultivation. Most food items are imported.

"Our soil is very rich," Taban said, "but people still break the soil by hand" as they've done for thousands of years, using tools like hoes or mattocks. "We need to learn a better way."

The country has abundant water but no plans for irrigation, Taban

said. And its more than 12 million cattle are used for meat and milk (and as dowries); few are used for pulling plows or even carts.

Cattle hold incredible potential, according to Michael McClellan, deputy chief of mission in Juba. “I’ve seen how hard the average farmer works. If that man or woman can get the right training with cattle, the possibilities are endless,” he said. “The nation could begin to feed itself.”

McClellan organized the TV team’s visits to Tillers International in Scotts, Mich., which focuses on farming with oxen, and to the annual Horse Progress Days, which draws thousands to Arcola, Ill. The aim: to witness the latest in draft animal technology.

But it’s still day one of their visit, at the Pioneer Equipment warehouse, where Wengerd and his sons asked many questions: How large is the average farmer’s field? How much do you cultivate before planting? How do you make your tools? Does South Sudan have blacksmiths?

“Only through a lot of questions,” Wengerd explained, “can we get an accurate picture of how their whole system works. This trip is learning about what works best for them, in their country. It’s not taking what works best for us here and simply moving it there. That’s a recipe for disaster.”

South Sudan has known disaster and continues to know hardship. More than 2 million people died in the civil war. There are few paved roads and only one hospital for a nation of 10 million.

“It’s through sustainable agriculture,” McClellan said, “that the nation can rebuild itself, field by field. It brings families closer, strengthens the bonds of faith and binds communities with common goals.” ■



Above: Henry Jada John covers a July 4th parade in Mattoon, Ill. **Opposite:** Henry Jada John, left, and Alex Taban learn about traditional planting with Dulcy Perkins of Tillers International in Scotts, Mich. **Below:** Alex Taban films at Horse Progress Day in Arcola, Ill. *Photos by Kevin Krug*





Strategic Planning

New method aligns goals with resources

By Rebecca Richards Webb and Jason Wall, Bureau of Budget and Planning

Strategic planning is a forward-looking management tool to set priorities, focus resources, strengthen operations and ensure all are working toward shared objectives. The first Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review recommended the Department improve planning, and the Strategic Planning steering group embraced this recommendation. It overhauled the way the Department develops long-term plans to avoid having to put out “day-to-day fires” and instead anticipate and mitigate them in advance. The new method focuses on choosing where to concentrate resources over the long term for goals and objectives.

The Bureau of Budget and Planning (BP), Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Resources (F) and USAID coordinate their management of bureau and mission strategic planning, creating a strong link between long-term strategic planning and shorter-term tactical resourcing.

“Both State and USAID face increasingly difficult budget environments,” explained former Deputy Secretary Tom Nides, as he introduced the new planning processes. “This challenge presents an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to rigorous planning that will maximize the impact of every dollar spent.”

In this constrained budget environment, a strategic approach that identifies priorities and budgets to support them is critical. The Department’s new model for strategic planning differs from the past by being more streamlined and integrating more with budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.

With the advent of more integrated planning and budgeting processes, lots of changes have taken place. Strategic planning and

resource planning are now separate and sequential processes. The Department sets objectives before determining the appropriate funding level, rather than combining strategic and resource planning. Recognizing that strategic planning requires significant coordination, support and flexibility, as well as longer horizons, there are now separate strategic planning processes: Integrated Country Strategies (ICS) for all overseas missions, and the Joint Regional Strategies (JRS) and Functional Bureau Strategies (FBS) for regional and functional bureaus. Mission and bureau resource requests are still submitted annually, but are now guided by three-year strategies that require more collaboration with bureau partners and other U.S. agencies at posts, and directly advance the Agency Joint Strategic Goals.

The third phase of the new strategic planning process began in September, as the bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central Asian Affairs and a dozen functional bureaus began developing their first plans. By year’s end, all functional and regional bureaus and more than 100 missions will have completed or be close to completing their strategic planning.

The strategic planning process began from the top with the design of the Joint State/USAID Strategic Plan (Department plan). That planning has already paid off: It has advanced the Department goal of supporting American prosperity through economic diplomacy, for example, in Australia, where the U.S. Embassy in Canberra supported a U.S. firm’s bid to supply communication equipment to the National Broadband Network Company of Australia. As a result, Space Systems/Loral won a contract that will generate 2.5 million man-hours of

work at its Palo Alto, Calif., facility and a similar amount of work at downstream suppliers. The \$680-million project has \$450 million in U.S. export content and will add 400 employees at Loral.

The Department's goals guide development of the regional and functional bureau plans. The Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs (EB), for instance, uses its FBS to focus resources and efforts on just four goals, a manageable number that facilitates measurement of results.

According to former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Deborah McCarthy, "Drafting the new EB Functional Bureau Strategy was an opportunity to bring bureau leadership together to think about the big picture: Where would the world be in 2030 and what should EB be doing now to prepare? Out of those discussions came a more focused strategic plan with clear priorities and performance measures."

U.S. missions reported 775 success stories in their advocacy for U.S. businesses in fiscal 2012, exceeding EB's target. According to Assistant Secretary Jose Fernandez, "By collecting data from 212 posts across the globe, we have concrete examples of the support the Department of State provides to U.S. businesses every day." EB used its plan to identify priorities in its Congressional outreach strategy. More economic successes are at cas.state.gov/econatstate/.

Missions use Department and bureau plans to develop their Integrated Country Strategies. The new ICS process reduces mission workload and allows the chief of mission to lead the development of shared objectives for all agencies under his or her authority.

Nearly 100 U.S. missions have completed their ICS, and staff members at some of these missions say there are real benefits to the new process. At the U.S. Embassy in London, which completed its ICS in 2012, Chargé d'Affaires Barbara Stephenson said ICS "is a powerful tool that brings all agencies under chief of mission authority together.

"It was a rewarding process because it gives agencies at post a better sense and understanding of the mission's highest priorities and how they fit into them," she said. "It also enabled mission leadership to seriously consider and brainstorm ways to fix management problems."

Both BP and F have gathered feedback from surveys and interviews with bureau and mission staff that have completed their plans, which

revealed some best practices for the design and development of the strategy. They found that key aspects to a successful design include:

- Incorporating senior leadership in the earliest stages;
- Collaborating with key partner bureaus and missions; and
- Carving out time for an offsite or focused discussion with the whole strategy team.

EB finished its FBS by using a working-level economic statecraft team to develop a draft Bureau Mission Statement to focus higher-level discussions, and by holding dialogues led by then-PDAS McCarthy, who challenged each DAS to think beyond his or her division to consider future global strategic trends and what EB should be doing to prepare. From these dialogues, leadership defined the mission statement, goals and objectives, then senior bureau officials looked at divisional input and identified the highest policy priorities. They then conferred with key partner bureaus and posts to incorporate common areas of interest and action items.

According to the Department's Director of Budget and Planning and Performance Improvement Officer Barbara Retzlaff, several bureaus and missions have said the new planning process is a great improvement. "The plans give missions and bureaus a consolidated approach," she observed.

Both F and BP recognize that bureaus and missions will need support to switch from old to new planning methods. As Rob Goldberg, director of the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance, put it, "We have a core team that will work with bureau planners and provide outreach to missions and bureaus. We strongly encourage missions and bureaus to use the new resources available during the roll-out of the processes."

Among these resources is the strategic planning site on Diplopedia, at diplopedia.state.gov. It has timelines for each planning phase, as well as reference materials, monitoring and evaluation guidance, and completed strategies. There's also a dedicated email address, PlanningandBudgeting@state.gov, which is monitored regularly for questions, issues, suggestions and concerns related to the processes. ■



Above: Barbara J. Stephenson, chargé d'affaires, Embassy London, center, prepares for a planning meeting of the Country Team. *State Department photo*

Opposite: Conferring at a planning meeting are, from right, Director of Bureau of Budget and Planning Barbara Retzlaff; Director of the Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance Rob Goldberg; Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Policy, Planning and Learning, Erin McKee; and committee members Peter Davis, Jason Wall, and Yaro Kulchyskyj.

Photo by James C. Pan



Treaty Helps Those Needing Aid with Books

The United States in June joined more than 125 other countries in Marrakesh, Morocco, in endorsing the final text of the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled. Stevie Wonder had challenged members of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to conclude this treaty, and followed through on his promise to perform for the delegates if they did so.

President Barack Obama in 2012 said the United States was committed to “the conclusion of an effective international instrument” that would help make books more widely available to approximately 300 million visually impaired people worldwide. The treaty accomplishes this by mandating that countries establish national copyright exceptions regimes—the United States already has such a system—allowing organizations serving individuals with print disabilities to make copies of works without the copyright owner’s permission, and by permitting cross-border flows of “accessible format copies” of works.

The approval of the text in Marrakesh is the first step. Once 20 WIPO members ratify the treaty, it will enter into force worldwide. The treaty, which improves access to printed works for persons with visual impairments while preserving the integrity of the international copyright system, is a landmark achievement for the multilateral intellectual property rights framework.



Chief Negotiator Justin Hughes, flanked by Ambassador Betty King and other U.S. delegation members, signs the Marrakesh Treaty.

Photo by Jim Fruchterman

Country Music, BBQ Highlights of 4th of July in Yerevan

This year’s Independence Day celebration at the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan didn’t involve long dresses and bow ties, but rather bandanas, cowboy hats and line dancers performing in T-shirts and blue jeans to American country music. It marked the first country music performance ever by an Armenian band.

Ambassador John Heffern said he has never seen such versatile and talented musicians as in Armenia, so he and his wife, Libby, decided to have a first-rate local band learn and perform a repertoire of popular American country songs. The music and dancing energized the crowd of 1,200. The guests, including Armenia’s first lady and its foreign minister and his wife, hailed the 20-plus years of U.S.-Armenia partnership with a down-home barbeque, festive decorations and fireworks.



Ambassador Heffern lends a hand at grilling during 4th of July celebrations at the embassy.

Photo by Jason Livingston

Post Celebrates Croatia's EU Membership

The U.S. Embassy in Zagreb joined Croatia in celebrating its July 1 accession to the European Union at a ceremony in downtown Zagreb attended by 28 heads of state from throughout Europe. A presidential delegation, led by Ambassador Kenneth Merten and including Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Reeker, represented the United States at the event.

The ceremony featured fireworks, musical and dance performances, and a display of images that traced Croatia from its origins to EU membership. The presidents of the European Council, European Parliament and European Commission commended Croatia for making fundamental changes in the past decade and urged it to engage with other countries.

Vice President Joe Biden wrote a Financial Times opinion article calling Croatia's accession a "cause for celebration and a reminder of what is possible."



U.S., Croatian and EU officials stand outside Zagreb's cathedral at Croatia's EU accession ceremony.

Photo by Vlada Hrvatska

Retirements

Foreign Service

Anderson, Thomas C.
Aulton, Pamela Roxanne
Bellamy, Pamela S.
Bopp, Steven Douglas
Calvert, Candace
Carlson, Eric K.
Coe, John Charles
Cunningham, Marion V.
Ennis, Karie L.
Ereli, Joseph A.
Fitzsimmons, George
Glover, Michael P.
Gorman, Carolyn M.
Hart-Serafini, Deborah S.

Johnson, Richard S.
Kimmel, Lawrence J.
Kim-Scott, Patricia
Meredith, Vicki Lee
Merideth III, Denny J.
Noel, Winston Ignatius
Oglesby Jr., Paul L.
Parish, Frances C.
Pennington, Karen L.
Rentz, Michael John
Rooney, John F.
Tiernan, Thomas Joseph
Wall, Marc M.
York, Elaine C.

Civil Service

Angell, Curtis D.
Chagnon, Natalie L.
Dow, Lorraine
Ennis, James G.
Hormats, Robert D.
Kamal, Shuckran A.
Klemstine, Evelyn R.
McGrath, John F.
Raisman, David

Randall, Miriam D.
Richter, Barbara H.
Ross, J. Belinda
Slygh, Patricia C.
Smith, Carol L.
Spoo, James F.
Stover, Richard R.
Viergutz, Carol A.
Yanez, Carlos O.

Art & BookFair This Month

The 53rd annual Art & BookFair of the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide (AAFSW) will take place Oct. 11-20 in the Main State Exhibit Hall and feature thousands of used books, paintings, art objects, textiles, stamps, coins, postcards, CDs, DVDs, maps, ephemera and more. A Collector's Corner will offer rare and unusual books.

On Oct. 11 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Oct. 14-18 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the event will be open to Department badge holders, spouses and escorted guests. On Oct. 12-13 and 19-20 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the sale is open to the public, with access through the C Street entrance.

The fair accepts Visa, Discover and Mastercard, and personal checks. Proceeds benefit Foreign Service families, local and international community projects and the AAFSW Scholarship Fund.



Department to Launch Human Trafficking Training

By Kim Natoli, deputy director, Office of Global Youth Issues

Most Americans believe that slavery in the United States is over—that it was eradicated with President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation and the passage of the 13th Amendment. Indeed, this year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. Sadly, though, slavery continues to exist in every country in the world, including ours, in a multitude of sectors.

Modern slavery’s impact is broad—from the metallic ore coltan in your smart phone, in some cases mined with forced labor, to the beans in your coffee, which may have been harvested by child slaves. Brothels staffed by the victims of sex trafficking have been found in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Diplomats’ treatment of domestic workers, from minor abuses to infractions rising to the level of human trafficking, has attracted significant political and media attention. Experts estimate that there are as many as 27 million victims of human trafficking in the world today.

Over the past 15 years, the terms “trafficking in persons” and “human trafficking” have been used to describe the activities involved when someone holds a person in compelled service through the use of force, fraud or coercion. The U.S. government considers trafficking in persons to include all criminal conduct involved in forced labor and sex trafficking—the exploitation of another person for profit.

In a historic speech at last year’s Clinton Global Initiative, President Barack Obama called the fight against human trafficking “one of the great human rights causes of our time.” This year, Congress reauthorized the Trafficking Victims Protection Act for the fourth time and continues to consider legislation aimed at bolstering the United States’ domestic response and international leadership on the human trafficking issue. In remarks at the White House Forum to Combat Trafficking in April, Secretary of State John Kerry said



the United States, “along with every nation, bear[s] the responsibility to confront modern slavery by punishing traffickers and helping survivors get their lives back on track.”

Within the federal government, the Department of State has long been at the forefront on trafficking. The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP) leads the United States’ global engagement in the fight against trafficking, partnering with foreign governments and civil society to develop and implement strategies, policies and programs for confronting modern slavery. J/TIP works closely with regional bureaus and posts overseas to educate our bilateral partners, as well as with Department employees who may not be aware of the federal government’s zero-tolerance policy regarding human trafficking.

Congress has shown increasing interest in trafficking violations in the context of federal contracting, and the Secretary annually issues a Trafficking in Persons Report that ranks other countries’ efforts to combat trafficking.

Taking the next step, the Department of State has developed training for personnel to recognize or report human trafficking violations. J/TIP, with the Foreign Service Institute, Bureau of Diplomatic Security and Office of Inspector General, has developed online interactive training that will be available to all Department personnel on OpenNet, much as cyber security training is today. The training will help ensure that direct-hire personnel can recognize and report human trafficking violations and understand their own professional responsibilities, including the prohibition on procuring commercial sex and standards of treating domestic staff.

The course will be launched this fall and will educate users on the basics of trafficking, vulnerable populations and trafficking indicators, as well as provide Department-specific content on FAM regulations and Standards of Conduct. FSI will include this training in Civil Service and Foreign Service orientation classes, as well as in leadership, management and ethics training courses. ■

After Hours

Going Gold DS agent's Olympic win motivates youth

BY LaSean Brown, assistant public affairs officer, U.S. Embassy in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) agents are often physically fit, but agent Matthew “Matt” Deakin has the gold medal to prove it—an Olympic one, in fact.

San Francisco native Deakin is a rower, a sport he’s practiced since age 14, drawn, he said, by the camaraderie of the athletes and the physical and intellectual challenge. Rowing, he said, may look easy when done well but is actually physically and technically demanding.

It’s also a sport with an important role for coaches. “They not only taught me the importance of the struggle to improve, but also the intensity with which it was to be done,” he explained.

Deakin rowed for four years at the University of Washington and spent his summers competing with the under-23 segment of the U.S. National Team, the development camp for the U.S. Olympic Team.

In 2003, he was invited to the 2004 Olympic selection camp in Princeton, N.J., and rowing became his life’s primary focus. Entering the Olympic trials meant competing against some of his best friends, some of whom he’d known since he was a teenager. He said that at this level of competition there is little physical difference between the athletes; a successful rower succeeds largely by making his fellow rowers look good.

In the Olympic rowing trials, each Olympic hopeful competes in a series of two-man races until every man has paired with and raced each of his competitors. Those who win the most races have the best chance of getting on the team.

During the 2004 Olympic trials, Deakin won every race by assessing each of his rowing partners and complementing the partner’s strengths. He made the team.

From then on, Deakin’s life revolved around preparing for what would be a record-breaking race. Days at the Olympic training camp in Colorado consisted of training and eating in two-hour intervals. To maintain the energy level needed to compete, Deakin said he had to consume roughly 8,000 calories per day, four times the normal adult intake. That meant eating more than a pound of spaghetti and meat sauce at every meal, a task big enough to fill the entire two-hour mealtime, which was



Deakin, left, and former Ambassador Thomas Dougherty, right, pay a courtesy call on Moogho Naaba, king of the Mossi Tribe. Photo by Abdoulaye Zaramé

followed by another two-hour practice.

At the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Deakin and his teammates set a new world record while winning their qualifying heat. A week later, they were on the Olympic podium after winning the final race, giving the United States its first Olympic victory in men’s eight rowing since the Tokyo Olympics 40 years earlier.

Deakin retired from professional rowing in 2008 and joined DS in 2010. He remains close to competitive athletics, now as a spectator. He was a senior watch officer in the joint operations center at the Pan-American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico, and a field liaison officer for the 2012 Olympic Games, assigned to the U.S. sailing team.

In his last assignment, as assistant regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Ouagadougou, Deakin was asked by Ambassador Thomas Dougherty to put his Olympic background to use by participating in a Sports Envoy program. Deakin worked with public affairs staff to develop and implement a motivational speaking tour, which he conducted at three American Corners and the embassy. He also gave

numerous print and radio interviews.

His talks on his Olympic victory at age 23 were aimed at audiences comprised mostly of young college students desperate to learn how to make it in a country that provides youths few economic opportunities. He told them about persevering at the Olympics despite long odds, and said he succeeded not because of his athleticism but because he always strives for excellence in himself and teamwork among his peers.

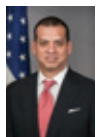
Though most of his audiences had little knowledge of water sports (Burkina Faso is landlocked), the director of a local radio station and International Visitors Leadership Program alumnus, Moustapha Thiombiano, surprised Deakin during an interview by displaying his rowing medals and speaking fondly of his time in the United States.

“It never crossed my mind when I was planning for this assignment that I would be able to interact with the youth of Burkina Faso in this way,” Deakin said, “but I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to meet so many terrific people.” ■

Appointments

Daniel A. Sepulveda

Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Communications



Daniel Russel

Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs



Linda Thomas-Greenfield

Assistant Secretary for African Affairs



Samantha Power

U.S. Representative to United Nations and the U.N. Security Council



Matthew Barzun

U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom



Daniel B. Baer of Colorado is the new U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he was a deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Prior to joining the Department, he was an assistant professor at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business, where he taught business ethics.

Matthew W. Barzun of Kentucky is the new U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Previously, he was national finance chair for President Obama's 2012 re-election campaign. Before that, he was ambassador to Sweden. An Internet pioneer, he was a top executive at CNET Networks, where he co-led all of CNET's online properties. After leaving CNET, he advised and invested in start-up Internet companies.

Daniel A. Clune (SFS) of Maryland is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Previously, he was principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Before that, he was deputy chief of mission in Canberra. He was also deputy chief of mission in Nassau. Other postings include Lima, Jakarta and Paris.

John B. Emerson of California is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany. Previously, he was president of Capital Group Private Client Services, during which time he served on President Obama's Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations. Before that, he served in President Clinton's White House as deputy director of both Presidential Personnel and Intergovernmental Affairs. He is married and has three daughters.



Check out our online magazine to watch a video message from featured ambassadors.

Patricia M. Haslach (SFS) of Oregon is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Previously, she was principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations. Before that, she was coordinator for Iraq Transition. She was ambassador to Laos and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum, and also served in Iraq, Pakistan, Indonesia, Nigeria and the U.S. Mission to the European Union. She has two daughters.

Douglas E. Lute of Indiana is the new U.S. Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he served at the White House under Presidents Bush and Obama as deputy national security advisor for Iraq and Afghanistan, and then as deputy assistant to the President focusing on Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. As an Army officer, he served multiple tours in NATO commands.



Samantha Power of Massachusetts is the new U.S. Representative to the United Nations and the U.N. Security Council, with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, she was National Security Staff senior director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights. Before that, she was a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. She authored the Pulitzer Prize-winning book "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide." She is married and has two children.

Daniel R. Russel (SFS) of New York is the new Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Previously, he was National Security Staff senior director for Asian Affairs. Before that, he was director of the Office of Japanese Affairs. He was consul general in Osaka-Kobe and also served in The Hague, Nicosia, Seoul, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, Osaka, Nagoya and Tokyo. He is married and has three children.

Daniel A. Sepulveda of Florida has been given the rank of Ambassador during his tenure as Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Communications and Information Policy. Prior to joining the Department, he was senior advisor to Senator William Cowan and Senator John Kerry, both of Massachusetts. Before that, he was an assistant U.S. trade representative. He also worked for Senator Barack Obama and advised him in his campaign for President.

Stephanie S. Sullivan (SFS) of New York is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo. Previously, she was chief of staff to the deputy secretary for Management and Resources. Before that, she was managing director for Management Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation. Other postings include Accra, Douala, Yaoundé and multiple tours in the Operations Center, including director. She is married and has two sons.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield (SFS) of Louisiana is the new Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. Previously, she was director general of the Foreign Service and director of Human Resources. Before that, she was ambassador to Liberia. She was principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of African Affairs and also served in Jamaica, Nigeria, The Gambia, Kenya, Pakistan and the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Switzerland.

Joseph Y. Yun (SFS) of Oregon is the new U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia. Previously, he was principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Before that, he was deputy assistant secretary in the same bureau. Other postings include Korea, Thailand, France, Indonesia and Hong Kong. He is married and has one son. ■



Myths and Realities

Misconceptions about promotions addressed

By Larry Mandel, director, 2011-2013, Office of Performance Evaluation, Bureau of Human Resources

Foreign Service employees are naturally anxious about the promotion process and career planning, especially during the period leading up to October's announcement of promotion decisions. In the Bureau of Human Resources, we often hear myths about promotions, and I think this is an especially good time to counter those misperceptions with some realities:

Myth #1 – Fast promotions are always a good thing.

Reality: We all want to be recognized for our work and promoted appropriately. But it is important to note that in our up-or-out system, quick promotion often leads to a quick exit—frequently quicker than we would like.

Most Foreign Service employees are eager to succeed. Our generalist officers passed a competitive exam and survived a grueling and rigorous interview and review process. Our specialists similarly passed through an extremely competitive process. One positive result of the entrance system is that we are all “hungry” to do well and succeed. On the other hand, most of us also want to enjoy the journey as well as the destination—we want to spend time with family and friends, experience the richness of our postings and allow ourselves the opportunities to grow and develop that are inherent in our work. Being constantly on the run for the next promotion can limit our ability to appreciate what we’re doing, while we’re doing it.

Additionally, our time-in-class and time-in-service rules usually mean that the sooner we are promoted, the sooner we will have to leave the Department. Fast-risers who enter the Foreign Service at age 30 and are promoted into the senior ranks at 40 will almost certainly have to retire in their 50s at the very latest—while they may have kids in college and other growing financial responsibilities.

So for most employees, planning for a normal career span means NOT seeking immediate promotions at every grade. A better strategy: Do excellent work, enjoy a rich home life and know you have one of the greatest careers in the world. Don't rush through it.

Myth #2 – If you don't like working in your career track, you can work outside it and still get promoted.

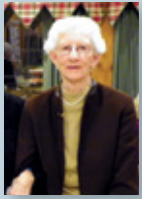
Reality: Every year our promotion boards see a handful of employees who have not served in their cone for years, and unfortunately are no longer current in their cone's job skills. This holds them back from being promoted.

The Procedural Precepts for the Foreign Service Selection Boards, which are negotiated annually with the American Foreign Service Association and published on the HR website, make clear that even class-wide competition still requires “employees to have demonstrated competency in their primary functional cone.” It will be very difficult for any board, conal or class-wide, to recommend promotion for employees without current in-cone skills. This language has been consistent for years—the Department is seeking well-rounded employees with broad vision and deep experience, including within their field. Serving outside your cone might make you an expert in some very important area, but without also showing abilities within your cone, you may find it difficult to get promoted.

To help your career, then, you need to serve successfully within your own career track periodically. Alternatively, you can apply to change career track under the Skill Code Conversion Program, but that is not always an easy task.

Those of us in the Foreign Service are truly fortunate to enjoy careers that take us to interesting parts of the world, challenge us to keep learning new things and, for many of us, allow us to share these experiences with family members. By being aware of the myths and acknowledging the realities, we can maintain longer careers and enjoy them even more. ■

Obituaries



Betty Louise Ashley, 80, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 18. She lived in Warrensville, N.C. Her postings included Cairo, Islamabad, Tunisia and Indonesia. She retired in 1984 with 22 years of service. She was active in her church and loved her animals and working in her flower garden.



Irving Cheslaw, 91, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 2 of natural causes at his home in Los Angeles, Calif. He served in the Army before joining the Department. He was ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, and also served in Jamaica, Ireland, Malaysia and Bangladesh. After retiring, he returned to Los Angeles, where he chaired local chapters of the Anti-Defamation League and B'nai B'rith, and developed and taught a course at UCLA related to the Foreign Service.



Judy Clark Felt, 68, wife of retired Foreign Service officer Jack Felt and former president and BookFair chairman of Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide, died July 22 of complications of ovarian cancer in Alexandria, Va. She accompanied her husband on postings to Nairobi, Mexico City, Toronto, Lagos and Athens. At the latter two posts, she served as community liaison officer. She was a demographer with the Population Reference Bureau and Decision Demographics.



Thomas Joseph Fitzpatrick Jr., 76, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 3 of complications from back surgery in Baltimore, Md. He served in the Navy before joining USIA and, later, the State Department. His postings included Yugoslavia, Mexico (twice), Venezuela, Spain and Brazil. After retiring in 1997, he moved to Maryland's Eastern Shore, where he loved armchair sports, golf and tennis, and enjoyed hosting St. Patrick's Day celebrations.



Katharine P. "Kay" Moseley, 70, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Oct. 4, 2012, in Grafton, Vt. She joined the Foreign Service in 2000 and served in Ndjamena, Chad; Nouakchott, Mauritania; and Khartoum, Sudan. After retiring in 2006, she worked in Nouakchott as a rehired annuitant. She did research on water in Mauritania and enjoyed traveling in Morocco and France.



Jonathan E. Mudge, 55, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 15 of pharyngeal cancer in Alexandria, Va. He taught English at the American Institute in Taiwan before joining the Department. His postings included Shanghai and Beijing. An economic/commercial officer, he was Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development desk officer before retiring in 2012.



Robert S. Smith, 88, a retired Foreign Service officer, died May 22 of melanoma in McLean, Va. He served in the Navy during World War II. He worked with UNESCO in Paris before joining the Foreign Service in 1961, initially with USAID. He was a deputy assistant secretary for Africa and ambassador to Ivory Coast. After retiring from the Department in 1979, he worked as a consultant on population issues and Africa. He was also president of the National Cathedral Association.



Jonathan "Jock" Stoddart, 91, a retired officer with the State and Defense departments, died July 12 in Woodlawn, Va. He served in the Army during World War II and later worked in DOD's International Security Affairs Office (ISA). He was ISA representative to the U.S. Embassy in London and office director for International Security Operations at the State Department. After retiring in 1984, he worked at the Department on Freedom of Information cases. He enjoyed history, politics, baseball, squash and golf.



Oliver L. Troxel Jr., 93, a retired Foreign Service officer, died June 12 in Morristown, N.J. He lived in Chester, N.J. He served in the Army. He was ambassador to Zambia and also served in Ethiopia, Ghana, Israel and the Philippines. After retiring in 1972, he enjoyed yearly trips to France with his wife.



Albert Vaccaro, 87, a retired Foreign Service officer, died July 29 of congestive heart failure. He served in the Navy during World War II before joining the Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research in 1954, where he specialized in Middle East affairs and traveled often to Damascus. After retiring in 1978, he moved to Napa Valley, Calif., where he pursued his interest in wine and cooking. He enjoyed traveling, especially to Europe and France.

End State



Armenia

A woman sits in a nearly deserted train car departing from Yerevan. Armenia's capital and largest city, Yerevan is also one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities.

Photo by Thomas Leuthard

PG. 28





Nepal

The setting sun casts a fiery glow over Phewa Lake in Pokhara, Nepal. Covering an area of 5.23 square km (2.0 square mi), Phewa is the second largest lake in the country.

Photo by Mike Behnken

PG. 10



The Bahamas

Space Shuttle *Atlantis* is seen over The Bahamas prior to docking with the International Space Station. Part of a Russian Progress spacecraft which is docked to the station is in the foreground.

Photo by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center



PG. 14

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Sierra Leone

Vibrantly-clad school children in a village outside Freetown wave at passing drivers from atop a rock pile.

Photo by bobthemagicdragon

PG. 6





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